

Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Virginia



The Long Range Plan

The Swords of Progress: A Vision for the Future
2021-2026

(Initially Instituted in 2018)

Version: 02/04/2021

Knights Templar Motto

Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam!

Not unto us, o Lord, not unto us, but unto your name great glory!

Long Range Planning Committee:

Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander, Chairman

Members:

Eminent Grand Generalissimo

Eminent Grand Captain General

Eminent Grand Senior Warden

Eminent Grand Junior Warden

Eminent Grand Standard Bearer

Eminent Grand Sword Bearer

Eminent Grand Warder

S. K. Jeff Paras

S. K. J.D. Davis

Following our "Ground Up" management philosophy, Chairmen of our Committees will also form part of the Long Range Planning Committee.

Introduction:

At the 67th Triennium, leaders of the Grand Encampment Knights Templar professed they operate on Long Range Plans and those plans are sound for the 2015-2018 Chivalric period. They will strive to make Templary the most prestigious Concordant Body for which one may petition membership. To do that Grand Encampment has four Goals:

Maintain its leadership development program

Improve ritual portrayal

Improve Public and Masonic awareness

Develop pride within our Order

At the 194th Stated Conclave of Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Virginia, the *Committee on Long Range Planning* reported that over the last several years the Committee had made several suggestions pertaining to the state of Templar Masonry in Virginia, many of which have not been implemented or implemented only partially. A review of past Committee reports and long-range planning efforts

showed the goals, and their discussions, have been found in various District Deputy Grand Commander Manuals or Grand Commander Program Objectives. While there were differences from year to year as to what the goals and objections are, there was some agreement as well.

However, Grand Commandery and its Constituent Commanderies continue to experience dramatic loss of membership, deficient ritualistic proficiencies, and disappointing attendance. Accordingly, this plan will bring continuity and unity to Grand Commandery and its Constituent Commanderies' planning progress.

Long Range Planning is critical to Grand Commandery and its Constituent Commanderies' success. Simply put, planning provides a road map that describes how the Grand Commandery executes its Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives, and sets measures of effectiveness. It is a tool to help Grand Commandery and its Constituent Commanderies better focus on programs, set realistic goals and objectives, identify current strengths and weaknesses relative to major competitors, and to effectively use resources and time.

Written plans provide motivation, streamline communications, and keep Grand Commandery of Virginia and its Constituent Commanderies moving in the right direction. It develops a sense of ownership among the Sir Knights and provides a base from which progress can be measured and establishes a mechanism for informed change when needed.

Vision

Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Virginia is a Christian-oriented fraternal organization beholden to the Grand Encampment Knights Templar of the United States of America, committed to attracting and retaining Christian Masons of high quality, who strive for self-improvement and the opportunity to make a positive difference in Templar Masonry and their community.

Mission

As Knight Templars, we aim to assist in defending the Christian faith and to advance Christian principals in all that we do. To emulate the selfless principals of our ancient forbearers, and to provide a vehicle for Christian Freemasons to actively engage in pursuing charities by: Enabling research - that others may see and support - that others may learn and have opportunities - that others may experience the Holy Land. Thus, by fraternal friendship and various crafts of self-enlightenment, we can pursue a better life to aid and assist others.

Core Values

Humanity – Openness – Integrity – Courage – Creativity – Excellence

[Common beliefs and philosophy shared among Knights Templar of Virginia]

Humanity – As a community we treat one another with dignity and mutual respect at all times no matter what our views and our positions.

Openness – We will strive to communicate openly and candidly with one another and to share information enabling us to achieve our objectives within the Chivalric Craft. Integrity – We will be ethical, responsible, and consistent with our commitment; we are willing to be held accountable for our actions.

Courage – We have the strength of character, conviction of belief to always do what is right, and to make the required decisions to secure the future of Grand Commandery and its Constitution Commanderies.

Creativity – We will look for new and creative ways to approach and resolve the issues and challenges that the Grand Commandery and its Constituent Commanderies face.

Excellence – We will always attempt to exceed expectations and perform at the very highest levels of quality. We will strive to evaluate the outcomes of our activities in terms of their quality, substance and impact.

Swords of Progress (Strategic Themes)

Governance - Membership Enhancement - Templar Leadership & Education

Ritualistic Improvement - Chivalric Philanthropies – Religious Observance

Support Masonic Youth - Promote York Rite Unity – Bicentennial Support

The Swords of Progress were derived to meet the needs of Grand Commandery of Virginia and Constituent Commanderies and consist of five primary interrelated tasks:

- Deciding what business processes to use in setting the boundaries, direction, and support in making its needs. In effect, infusing its vision and mission with a sense of purpose, providing long-term direction, and establishing a clear mission to be accomplished.
- Converting Grand Commandery's vision and mission into measurable objectives and performance targets.
- Crafting a strategy to achieve the desired results.
- Implementing and executing the chosen strategy efficiently and effectively.
- Evaluating performance, reviewing new developments, and initiating corrective adjustments in long-term direction, objectives, strategy, or implementing in light of actual experience, changing conditions, new ideas, and new opportunities.

Long Range Goals & Objectives/Accompanying Actions

In the same way each Sir Knight wields his sword to defend innocent maidens, destitute widows, helpless orphans, and the Christian Religion, we need to wield our swords to develop several strategic areas to grow and improve as an organization, attract and retain Christian Masons, and achieve our mission goals. Each Sword of Progress is essential to the future of Templar Masonry in Virginia and has broad long-range goals, objectives, and measurable short-range actions.

Sword of Progress Governance

Long Range Goal – Enhance the Grand Commandery of Virginia operational effectiveness at all levels.

“The Preamble of the Constitution of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the U.S.A. reads-“We, the Knights Templar of the United States, in order to secure unity and better government and to increase the prosperity and influence of Templary, which is declared to comprise the Orders of Christian Knighthood known as Red Cross, Knight of Malta and Knight Templar, do ordain and establish this Constitution.” Thus, by their own enactment, Knights Templar created their own controlling government. Knights Templar is governed in all of their activities: first by the Constitution, Statutes and Rituals of the Grand Encampment, and by the Orders and Decisions of the Grand Master; second, by the Constitution, Laws and Regulations of their Grand Commandery, and by the orders and decisions of the Grand Commander; third, by the By-Laws of the Commandery of which they are members, and by the orders of the Commander. Between Triennial Conclaves, exclusive power is given to the Grand Master of the Grand Encampment to enforce the laws; to interpret the laws when necessary; to maintain a watchful supervision over all Commanderies, Grand, Constituent and Subordinate; to promote the general welfare of the Order and a host of other powers and duties.” (Charting the Course, Sir Knight Wilber M. Brucher, Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the U.S.A., 1965, p 6)

Objectives:

- Identify and evaluate how the Grand Commandery can be more pro-active.
- Shape an effective concept of governance based on sound management principals and promotes accountability, participation, predictability, and transparency.
- Identify what leadership, administrative and financial skills Grand Line Officers need to promote a more competent, effective and pro-active leadership.
- Encourage increased effectiveness and productivity of Grand Commandery’s Standing and Special Committees and promote awareness and confidence in their integrity, competence and professionalism.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Grand Commandery in responding to changes and develop the means to respond to new opportunities.
- Assess the talents of individual Sir Knights and develop a database of a pool of resources, to be placed in strategic leadership positions /roles.

- Assess and alter, if necessary, the structure of Grand Commandery and, where needed, to ensure an efficient implantation of the Vision Statement and Swords of Progress.
- Evaluate how to better utilize district visits, meetings, and schools.
- Build relationships with other Masonic associations and community organizations to expand Grand Commandery's influence in social and fraternal matters.

Actions:

Chivalric Organization and Management

- Evaluate the effectiveness of Grand Commandery organization and processes to be responsive to positive changes and new opportunities.
- Develop roles and responsibilities for each elected and appointed Grand Commandery officer.
- Develop and maintain a leadership program to train and enhance the skills of the Grand Commandery Elected Line Officers.
- Review the composition of committees to ensure that the members have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be effective.
- Review and develop an efficient and motivating district meeting.

Financial

- Leverage financial management information for strategic planning and budgeting activities for Grand Commandery and its Constituent Commanderies.
- Adopt comprehensive portfolio and investment planning and provide a financial process to ensure the stability and long-term success of the Grand Commandery.
- Shape the Grand Commandery's project management, ensuring effective monitoring practices are in place, ensuring delivery is on time and on budget, and that what is delivered meets Grand Commandery's needs.
- Continue to place emphasis on increasing operating funds through the Baldwin-Brown Program.
- Encourage Sir Knight to remember the Grand Commandery in their wills.

Communications

- Encourage Constituent Commanderies to cultivate external communications among the family and be a leading source of information and knowledge on Templar subjects.
- Enhance internal communications among Grand Commandery and its Constituent Commandery members.
- It should be noted that Templary teleconferences are an extension of our Grand Commandery's communication abilities.
- Help Freemasonry and Constituent Commandery communities.
- Build a positive public image of Templar Freemasonry, Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Virginia, and the Constituent Commanderies.

Technology

- Expand Grand Commandery data base systems to allow easier access by Constituent Commanderies.
- Create interactive forms for Grand Commandery reports.
- Create web hosting through the Grand Commandery Office and provide a template for all Virginia Constituent Commanderies.
- Develop interactive Chivalric educational programs.

Sword of Progress - Membership Enhancement

Long Range Goal – The 3's of an effective Membership Enhancement Program is: *Recruitment, Retention* and *Restoration*.

The COVID 19 pandemic makes the challenges of a declining membership become even more of a priority that we do more than just recruit new members but equally as important to retain members. If we do not recruit them into the Chapter, we will never see them in Commandery. Membership is a complex problem that we have faced for years with little success. What is need is an innovative approach, a Bottom-Up approach. Grand Commandery can and should provide guidance and positive support while the Constituent Commanderies has the resource to actively change Virginia Templar membership problems. Realizing most things affect membership, the Grand Commandery Membership Committee was moved to Standing Committee Status, assuming the Citizenship & Public Affairs Committee responsibilities, and reorganized into a new organization with a State Chairman (Coordinator) and 5 Regional Teams of knowledgeable Sir Knights dedicated to development of an effective membership program. Then the Grand Commandery Membership Guidebook ***Building and Sustaining Templar Membership: Essential Element to Future Prosperity*** was published to shape the future of Templar membership, develop effective goals and strategies, and to provide motivation, streamline communications, and keep our Commanderies growing. The Membership Guidebook was provided to all Membership Teams and Constituent Commanderies and has been posted to the Grand Commandery of Virginia website. In the words from Socrates: "The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new."

The three R's of any Membership Campaign are recruitment, recognition, and retention. They are the foundation upon which any campaign must be built. **Recruitment** is the lifeline of every Commandery. Without a dynamic membership base, we cannot reach the heights our Valiant and Magnanimous Order so richly deserves. **Recognition** means awards are good for competition and motivation. In every measurable way, Commanderies that utilize recognition and award programs experience higher membership loyalty and attendance, increased goal achievement, and higher self-esteem. Sir Knights who feel good about their abilities and their contributions to the Commandery are more likely to be happy, loyal, and motivated. When recognized for their efforts and achievements, they historically elevate their desire to excel. **Retention** is perhaps the most important and hardest to achieve; we must retain our current members as well as the newly created Sir Knights. A wavering brother needs encouragement. We can turn the tide of NPD's with a friendly call or visit, informing the member of the

importance of his remaining in the Commandery. Keep members informed on activities and events; show the Commandery values members' service.

Now, let us add Masonic Mentoring and Masonic and Public Relations to the Membership Campaign. A **Masonic Mentor** is more than just a teacher, he is a coach, a confidant, and a friend and **Masonic and Public Relations** is about how we should conduct ourselves to present a better picture to all who look upon our proud Order.

The honor and prestige of Templar Masonry emanates from its high standards of morality, its moral teachings, the fact that those teachings are exemplified in the lives of men, who not only believed in them, but demonstrate them in their lives, morally and socially. It should be the goal of every Knight Templar to spread the good news of Templar Masonry and to encourage his Brothers in the Symbolic Lodges and Companions in the Capitular Chapters to enlist under our Banner. It is also incumbent upon us to reach out to the Sir Knights who no longer attend our conclaves, or who have allowed their membership to lapse. And lastly, and perhaps most importantly, we need to keep them attending by offering more than the "same old stuff."

To communicate well with another person, you need to account for 100% of what is going on. In other words, effective communication is needed for our Commanderies to be successful and the most critical element of good communications is being present, being fully aware of what is going on in the Asylums, District events, and at Grand Commandery. Being present will make all other elements of good communications possible.

So, remember a Templar's work is never over, be personally involved in Masonic and community activities, be visible in uniform, set the example, be positive, be proud to be a Knight Templar, and others will want to be identified with our "team." "*Audentes Fortnae Juvat,*" "Fortune Favors the Bold." Project an image of vibrancy, vitality, and vigor, in and out of our Asylums. Make Templar Masonry a meaningful Christian Order that has the respect and admiration of the public at large and our non-Templar Masons and Companions in particular. The sublime principles and the foundation of strong Christian values make this Magnanimous Order stand for something of incredible value.

Objectives:

- The Constituent Commanderies must take the business of Templar Masonry serious and maintain the high standard of Templar Masonry.
- ***Solicitation is not only allowed, but also encouraged!***
- Emphasize the benefits of joining a Commandery of Knights Templar.
- Each Sir Knight must take a personal responsibility to preserve Templar Masonry in Virginia.
- Expanding membership is the preeminent goal of every Sir Knight and every Commandery – just stemming the flow of losses is not acceptable.
- Each Constituent Commandery should institute an Amnesty Program and sell the benefits of restoring Templary membership.
- Ascertain why Fratres are not attending Templar conclaves and events – make meetings more interesting and important to them.

- Every Commandery must work toward retaining our current members as well as newly created Sir Knights.

Actions:

Recruitment. Every Virginia Constituent Commandery must recognize the need for a continuous, aggressive effort to attract and bring in new Master Masons of outstanding character to fill our ranks. This requires a commitment to reach out beyond our Royal Arch Chapters and even our Blue lodges to our families, friends, and business associates, encouraging them to become members of our fraternity. By our actions and associations, we should always be ready to demonstrate the relevance and pride in being a Masonic Knight Templar.

- Recruiting is the lifeline of every Commandery. Without a dynamic membership base, we cannot reach the heights our Valiant and Magnanimous Order so richly deserves.
- Set an annual goal to recruit new Sir Knights and communicate that goal throughout the community. (This number should exceed the previous year's numbers by at least 5-6% of your existing membership numbers)
- Every Sir Knight should be visible in uniform, set the example, be positive, be proud to be a Knight Templar – others will want to be identified with our “team.”
- Every Sir Knight should attend conferrals of Degrees in their Symbolic Lodge and Royal Arch Chapters.
- Always have at least two Royal Arch and Commandery petitions with you.
- Volunteer to teach catechisms and otherwise mentor newly raised Master Masons.
- Appoint ambassadors to the Symbolic Lodges, Royal Arch Chapters, and Youth Organizations.
- Every Sir Knight should work to achieve a Grand Commandery *Membership Cordon Award*.
- Provide every Sir Knight with the tools necessary for approaching and recruiting new members (print materials, brochures, and suggested scripts for discussion).
- Develop and implement regular Member Referral events such as inviting prospective new members to a dinner or evening where promotional videos or PowerPoints may be presented that demonstrate what it is to be a Knight Templar.
- Offer to provide membership promotion/educational programs for other Masonic bodies.
- Closely follow and communicate with all member referrals, inviting them to join in on any open events such as dinner before stated meetings.

Retention is perhaps our most important membership asset—it should be a constant (7/365 day) effort—we must retain our current members as well as the newly created Sir Knights. It is equally vital that we must always strive to keep the members we currently have, making certain that we give them a reason for maintaining their membership and a desire to remain active. Retention also involves keeping our Sir Knights gainfully involved from the first moment they have passed through the Order of the Temple; show the Commandery values members' service.

- Stress Fraters' membership in a Commandery of Knights Templar, as well as to those newly created Sir Knights – to the Commandery and to the members.
- Stress the importance of their attendance and their participation. Make them feel valuable and make them feel missed!
- Every Sir Knight should have an opportunity to participate in the Orders of Knighthood and attend York Rite Masonic events and activities.
- Make use of e-mail, trestle boards, telephone trees, and Ambassadors to keep Commandery members, Symbolic Lodges, and Royal Arch Chapters up to date on Templar Masonry events and activities.
- Implement a call program to check on the welfare of those Sir Knights who have not been in attendance for some time or have suffered from some illness or malady, always encouraging them to come back to your meetings.
- Ascertain why Fratres are not attending templar conclaves and events – solicit their thoughts on how to make the Commandery more interesting and important to them; offer to provide transportation.
- Develop and implement a plan to provide for the measurement of member satisfaction.
- Reduce demits and suspensions to a goal of less than two percent (2%) of your existing membership.
- Contact those Sir Knights who have remained non-payment of dues (NPD), preferably by telephone or in person, email, or USPS to remind them how much we value their continued membership and timely payment of dues.
- When making this call, ask them if there is any reason for this overdue payment or if there is anything that we can do to assist them.
- Always attempt to interview those members who have indicated that they wish to demit or have been recently suspended for non-payment of dues (NPD) to determine their reasons for dropping their membership.

Mentoring. Mentoring the new candidate starts with his journey through the Orders, carefully explaining all that he has seen and heard, even if he has an innate ability to absorb this new knowledge. It requires that we should always work to fulfill their expectations as best we can, adding new light to their lives as a Sir Knight.

- Implement an effective Mentor Program and provide for a follow up of program effectiveness.
- Make personal contact with inactive members to determine their needs and to further explore members' needs and desires as well as checking on the fulfillment of their expectations of membership.
- Inform them of current and future activities in hopes of increasing participation.
- Schedule quality activities for members on a regular basis, provide educational programs.
- Train a cadre of capable Sir Knights in what it is to be an effective Mentor.

Recognition. Awards are good for competition and motivation. In every measurable way, organizations that utilize recognition and award programs experience higher membership loyalty and attendance, increased goal achievement, and higher self-esteem. Sir Knights who feel good about their abilities and their contributions to the organization are more likely to be happy, loyal, and motivated. When

recognized for their efforts and achievements, they historically elevate their desire to excel. In other words, they become *engaged in your Commandery*.

- Recognize Sir Knights that receive awards at Stated Conclaves, Templar Dinner with the Ladies and Guests, Templar Festivals, and publish the award on the Grand Commandery website and in various Masonic publications.
- Make a concerted effort to learn both the recipients' name and the particulars of the award. Everyone loves to hear their names, so make sure that it is pronounced correctly.
- Ensure that these individuals attend your next Conclave and have the Commander, or a Grand Line Officer make a presentation to him at the head of the Commandery.
- Publicize and promote the awards offered by Grand Commandery of Virginia and the Grand Encampment and encourage Sir Knights to work to achieve the same.

Restoration. We have spent a great deal of time and effort to recruit new members only to let them fall by the wayside as a demit or suspension for non-payment of dues (NPD). It is imperative that we try to contact them and revisit their reasoning and to determine if there is anything we can do to rectify or fulfill those hopes or desires that we have failed them by. Do not just write them a letter; pick up the phone or, better yet, stop by their homes and make personal contact. The Commander and some other Sir Knight who is personally acquainted with the former member should arrange to visit him in person at his home. Make the case for reinstatement and sell him the benefits of restoring his membership. BE POSITIVE!!! You may find yourself pleasantly surprised at the reception with which you will meet!

- We can turn the tide of Non-Payment of Dues (NPD's) with a friendly call or visit, informing the member of the importance of his remaining with the York Rite.
- Set a Restoration goal of two percent (2%) or more of your Commandery membership numbers for the year.
- Implement a program for contacting those Sir Knights who have been suspended over the past several years. Personal contact through a personal visit or by telephone is most preferable. Keep good accurate records of information gathered during these visits/phone calls.
- Ensure that the data on suspended members is current, accurate and available to the Membership committee (can be found on Membership Management System).
- Work with the elected leadership to determine if an agreeable long-amnesty program can or should be implemented.

Masonic Public Relations. Creating and maintaining a good working relationship with our Symbolic Lodges, Grand Lodge of Virginia, Royal Arch Chapters, Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Virginia, Scottish Rite Valleys, Shrine Temples, and Masonic Ladies' and Youth Groups – it is vital to the success of any Templar Membership Program. We should always demonstrate our commitment and support of the communities we live in and thereby attract potential new members.

- Review existing means of communication for effectiveness. We need to communicate to persuade our Symbolic Lodge Brethren and Royal Arch Companions that Templary Masonry stands for the highest ideas of Christianity. It represents the noblest in humanity; it reveals Christianity in action!
- Regularly support and interact with all Masonic organizations within your community area.
- Develop a Templar Ambassador Program to keep Master Masons and Companions up to date Templar Masonry events and activities.
- Provide the Sir Knights with the training and materials they can use to promote and educate our Masonic Brethren who are not yet Knight Templars on the reasons why they should join our ranks.
- Encourage all Sir Knights to become more active with their home lodge and chapter and lead by example what it is to be a Sir Knight.
- Hold joint meetings with all other Masonic bodies to determine how we can support one another with our membership numbers and programs.
- Plan and host dedicated events to honor the leaders of Symbolic Lodges, Royal Arch Chapters, Scottish Rite Valleys, and Shrine Temples thereby encouraging more cooperation among the entire Masonic family.
- Participate in public parades, memorial services, Veterans' events as a unit displaying your Beauseant and uniforms.
- Present the Flag or *13-Fold* and *Toast to the Flag* Programs at Masonic or Community events.
- Provide honor guards for officer installations or official events of any other Masonic Body.
- Develop new ways of communication, i.e. email blasts, Calling Post, Constant Contact, or effective websites. Establishing and developing effective communication is important to be heard and change your environment according to your own thoughts. No one will guess what you want or what you think if you do not tell them, and nothing is going to change if you do not propose a change.
- Submit positive examples of public relations successes for publishing on Grand Commandery website and in various Masonic publications.

Sword of Progress - Templar Leadership & Education

Long Range Goal – Templar Leadership & Education requires a sense of Christian Dedication, a positive attitude, proper work-ethic, and imagination.

“Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things. Management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success; leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall.” (The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, p 101, Stephen R. Covey)

To strengthen Templar organizations and begin to enact changes necessary to improve our Commanderies—we need to focus more on ***Templar Leadership***.

Objectives:

- Promote Chivalric Leadership and Education. There can be no dedication without education (*The Search for Leadership*, Allen E. Roberts).

Actions:

- Revive regional leadership and education conferences.
- Promote the Grand Commandery Leadership Correspondence Course – every Sir Knight needs to participate therein.
- Promote the Grand Encampment High Potential Leadership Program/Project – every Grand Line Officer and Constitution Commandery Officer needs to participate therein.
- Expand the Leadership and Education Committee and develop educational programs for Constituent Commanderies and education programs that can be given at Symbolic Lodges and Royal Arch Chapters.
- Develop and publish a Grand Commandery Guide Book for District Deputy Grand Commanders and Constituent Commandery Officers.
- Chivalric Education needs to stress;
 - Planning and preparation for Commanders
 - Purpose of Templary
 - Protocol
 - Duties and Responsibilities
 - Know the Law
 - Effective Communication
 - Templar Awards
 - Chivalric Philanthropies
 - Ways to improve attendance and increase interest

Sword of Progress - Ritualistic Improvement

Long Range Goal – Ritualistic Improvement starts with a fully integrated Ritual Team.

The Orders of Knighthood contain some of the most beautiful and impressive ceremonies in Freemasonry. Accordingly, the Orders should always be conferred in a dignified and impressive manner. Any less is not only to cheat our petitioners, but to fail miserably in our duty.

Ritual does not need to be mediocre; anyone can do ritual well—it isn't hard. It's mostly a matter of learning the words and the floor work. It doesn't demand a lot of time, or any particular talent, but it does require practice; be prepared and sincere. Do not just parrot the words: learn the names and background of the characters, research the settings and places, and understand the story and its teachings.

Objectives:

- Promote ritualistic proficiency.

Actions:

- Every Sir Knight should work to achieve a Grand Commandery *Ritualistic Proficiency Award*.
- District Instructors should conduct a District-wide School quarterly.
- Open Conclaves in Full Form.
- All Sir Knights should attend an Area Knight Templar School.
- Every Constituent Commandery should have a Director of Work.
- Keep Templar regalia and paraphernalia ready and in good order.
- Improve sword proficiency and floor work.
- Schedule practices before conferring the Orders.

Sword of Progress - Chivalric Philanthropies

Long Range Goal – Maintain a strong commitment to Chivalric Philanthropies.

The Grand Commandery supports three (3) primary philanthropies: The Knights Templar Eye Foundation, the Holy Land Pilgrimage Fund, and the Knights Templar Educational Foundation.

The Knight Templar Eye Foundation (KTEF) is one of the largest Masonic charities, and probably the best managed. Supported by member donations and investment income, the KTEF provides research grants to institutions and practitioners performing research in the treatment and prevention of diseases of the eye.

The Holy Land Pilgrimage Fund enables the Grand Commandery to send ministers to the Holy Land. Its purpose is to enable Christian ministers, who are young in their ministry, to walk where Jesus walked,

and to experience all that the Holy Land can offer. It is an inspirational experience to all who have participated, and Sir Knights are encouraged to propose their ministers for consideration.

The Knight Templar Education Foundation provides scholarships and grants to deserving students.

Objectives:

- Promote Chivalric Philanthropies.
- Double the number of eligible ministers the Grand Commandery sends to the Holy Land Pilgrimage (4 versus 2).

Actions:

- Actively solicit the Sir Knights to contribute to the Holy Land Pilgrimage Fund and seek 100% participation by each Commandery and each Sir Knight.
- Actively solicit the Sir Knights to contribute to the Knight Templar Eye Foundation and seek 100% participation in each Commandery and each Sir Knight.
- Actively solicit the Sir Knights to contribute to the Knight Templar Education Foundation and seek 100% participation by each Commandery and each Sir Knight.
- Every Sir Knight should work to achieve a Grand Commandery *Knight of Siloam Award*.
- Sponsor and participate in a fund-raising project to support our charitable endeavors.
- Recommend eligible Christian ministers to participate in the Holy Land Pilgrimage.

Sword of Progress - Religious Observance

Long Range Goal – Templary is Christian to the core—and we must never forget this fact for one instant.

“The characteristic purpose and the motivating dynamic of a Knight Templar, and of this Order, is a vigorous support of the Christian religion. Not only is an expressive program in this area, central to the whole program of Templary, but, together with the essentials of leadership and growth, all other programs related to it. .” (Charting the Course, Sir Knight Wilber M. Brucher, Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the U.S.A., 1965, p 7)

Objectives:

- To promote a devotion program and work with a local church.
- Bring a religious emphasis to every Conclave.
- Make a public appearance by church attendance in full Templar uniform.
- Assist in the Christian burial of our fallen Templars, when requested, or to conduct some memorial service.
- Close relations should be maintained with local ministers.

- Work with other organizations emphasizing Christian activities.

Actions:

- Every elected and appointed Grand Line Officer and District Deputy Grand Commander must attend the Grand Encampment East Coast Easter Sunrise Ceremonies.
- Each Commandery must have one or more representatives at the Grand Encampment East Coast Easter Sunrise Ceremonies.
- Every elected and appointed Grand Line Officer and District Deputy Grand Commander must attend the Religious Freedom Day Parade in Fredericksburg Virginia.
- Each Commandery must have one or more representatives at the Religious Freedom Day Parade in Fredericksburg Virginia.
- Each Commandery may annually assemble on Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, and Ascension Day in its Asylum or some place of public worship.
- Every Commandery will assemble in some church or its Asylum and have an address by its Prelate or some other person for Christmas and Easter.
- Offer Christian rites or memorial services for a fallen Sir Knight.
- Actively solicit contributions to the Holy Land Pilgrimage Fund.
- **Recommend eligible Christian ministers to participate in the Holy Land Pilgrimage.**

Sword of Progress - Support Masonic Youth

Long Range Goal – Lead Virginia Masonry in providing services on behalf of young people and the adults working for the betterment of our Masonic Youth

Masonic Youth Organizations not only need our support but deserve it as well. DeMolay International, Job's Daughters International, and International Order of Rainbow for Girls have been instrumental in forming good character and instilling good citizenship in young people for many years. Our Masonic Youth Organizations serve a critical role but are all too often under supported.

Constituent Commanderies should sponsor a program by a Masonic Youth Organization. The exemplification of the DeMolay Degree, which includes a dramatic presentation of the final trial of the last Grand Master of the Ancient Templars, Jacques DeMolay would be an excellent program. Also, the presentation of the Flower Talk at one of our functions would be

a good choice. Programs by the Job's Daughters and Rainbow Girls are also good subjects for youth programs.

Similarly, each Constituent Commandery should attend a meeting of one or more of our Masonic Youth Organizations as a body. Appear in uniform and offer to reciprocate by presenting a program or presentation. The youth will be thrilled at your appearance!

Virginia's Commanderies and their Sir Knights are uniquely qualified to lead Chivalric Masonry providing services on behalf of young people, and the adults working for the betterment of our youth groups. You can help young people: accept greater responsibility for their actions; providing guidance and support;

give opportunities for public speaking; instill respect in our youth through the unique rituals and customs respective to each of our Masonic youth groups; and teambuilding and character development to prepare them for adulthood.

Objectives:

- Promote Masonic Youth

Actions:

- Visit the local DeMolay, Job's Daughters, and Rainbow Girls in uniform and often.
- Be an Adult Masonic Advisor or Associate Bethel Guardian.
- Invite the DeMolay, Job's Daughters, and Rainbow Girls to present a program in a Knights Templar Conclave.
- Offer to present the colors or a Flag Program to a meeting of the DeMolay, Job's Daughters, and Rainbow Girls

Sword of Progress - Promote York Rite Unity

Long Range Goal – Foster the foundation of Masonic unity within the York Rite of Freemasonry.

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. (Psalms 133: 1-3 KLV)

How pleasant for the Brethren to dwell together in unity! One of the enduring principal objectives of Grand Commandery is to bring about Virginia York Rite Unity. That goal requires more than mere lip service – if York Rite Masons are to not only survive but also to prosper, it is incumbent upon each of us to support each other.

Objectives:

- Build and strengthen intra-fraternal relations with York Rite Bodies.

Actions:

- Attend the Official Visit of the Grand Master of Masons, Grand High Priest of Masons and Grand Commander of Virginia.
- Attend Official Visit of the local District Deputy Grand Master, District Deputy Grand High Priest, and District Deputy Grand Commander.
- Attend one or more Stated and/or Work Meetings of the local Symbolic Lodge and Royal Arch Chapter.

- Attend the Annual Stated Meeting of Grand Lodge of Virginia, Annual Grand Convocation of Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Virginia, and the Stated Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Virginia.
- Attend Annual York Rite Banquets.
- Volunteer to participate in Symbol Lodge and/or Royal Arch ritual work, teach catechisms, and otherwise mentor newly raised Master Masons.
- Volunteer to present a paper on some York Rite subject, especially on a Templar topic.

Sword of Progress - Bicentennial Support

Long Range Goal – The Grand Commandery Bicentennial Ceremony will honor 200 years of Templary Masonry in Virginia.

General Order 1 (May 3, 2014) created a Grand Commandery Special Bicentennial Committee to oversee planning and executing the Grand Commandery Bicentennial Ceremony. General Order 2 (June 25, 2014) created the Bicentennial

Celebration Fund account as a sub-account of the Permanent Fund for management and oversight of bicentennial funds. From a planner viewpoint, creating a Bicentennial Committee and a Bicentennial Celebration Fund are good first starts. The “Who, What and Why” is easy; the “Where, When, What, and How” are the hard parts. The Bicentennial Celebration needs to be bounded, funded, and advertised and efforts on behalf of the Bicentennial, if possible, be in accordance with federal and state regulations for a “not-for-profit” organization.

Objectives:

- Honor 200 years of Templary Masonry in Virginia

Actions:

- The Bicentennial Committee must answer the “Who, What, Why, Where, When, What, and How” for a successful Bicentennial Ceremony.
- The Grand Commandery Finance Committee and the Grand Commanders in the pre-Bicentennial period should set aside monies in the annual budgets to fund Bicentennial activities.
- The Permanent Fund Trustees and Grand Commandery Finance Committee must work and coordinate their Bicentennial efforts with each other.
- Publicize upcoming Bicentennial activities and events.
- Local Action Groups must be established to work on:
 - Schedule Bicentennial activities and events.
 - Hotel Arrangements and Meals
 - Reception/Registration/Hospitality Rooms
 - Entertainment/Tours
 - Transportation

Respectfully Submitted, 2018

Sir Knight Benjamin F. Hill, KTCH

Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander

Chairman, Long Range Planning Committee

Respectfully Updated, 2019

Sir Knight John Jeffrey McClelland, KCT

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(With thanks to Sir Knight Benjamin F. Hill, KTCH, REPGC, for his continued review of this Plan.)